



For fans, *Simpsons Movie* worth the D'oh

filmreview

The Simpsons Movie

Now Playing
Directed by David Silverman
Starring Dan Castellaneta, Nancy Cartwright, Julie Kavner and Yeardley Smith

MICHAEL LAROCQUE
Arts & Entertainment Staff

In many ways, *The Simpsons Movie* is like a party thrown for an old friend. You might not see each other anymore or even find that you have that much in common with one another, but you show up out of respect and reverence to the fact that you've known each other for such a long time.

And so for those of use who have grown up with *The Simpsons* and

have seen the quality wane in recent years, it comes as no surprise that the film grossed over \$70 million during its opening weekend. Several generations have quite literally grown up with *The Simpsons* trustily alongside them on Sunday nights, so a large and eager audience could be expected.

The Simpsons Movie follows the ever-zany exploits of Homer, who in this particular scenario has single-handedly brought about an ecological disaster that threatens to destroy Springfield. Facing isolation in a glass dome by a tyrannical Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the residents of Springfield, once relatively understanding of Homer's gaffes, form an angry mob and run him out of town. Upon learning that the EPA has more in store for Springfield, it's up to the Simpsons clan to save their friends.

The fact that this sounds like any

other episode of *The Simpsons* is at once the good and the bad of the whole ordeal. For those loyal fans who are still laughing alongside the Simpson family every Sunday night, *The Simpsons Movie* won't disappoint. It's no better or worse than what you could catch on television each week, and I suppose that after being on the air for nearly 20 years, that can be considered a credit to the film.

But on the other hand, *The Simpsons* have been on television for nearly 20 years! As someone who has experienced the glory of *The Simpsons* in the '90s—someone who remembers the likes of Hank Scorpio and knows how funny *The Simpsons* can be—I had hoped that the *Simpsons* team would bring us something better than an episode lasting an hour and a half.

The flick smacks of all the signs that mark the decline of current episodes:

over-the-top zaniness (mostly on the part of Homer), along with heavy-handed "satire" and social commentary that is neither deft nor particularly daring.

In *The Simpsons Movie*, a seemingly child-minded Arnold Schwarzenegger occupies the White House, making policy decisions by randomly pointing his finger at files. Whether this is a commentary on the current occupier of the White House or of Schwarzenegger's own political career is unclear, but either way, the current president isn't truly that stupid, nor is Arnold that poor of a politician. But heck, it sure feels like they're making a statement about something, and judging by the guffaws of laughter that erupted, apparently that's all that really matters.

The real problem that faces *The Simpsons* is that after 18 seasons, the show has become a 30-minute cultural

institution that has gone from mocking modern society and pop-culture to being one of the predominant forces shaping those particular arenas. When people use "D'oh!" in everyday conversation without a trace of irony, it seems like a caricature when Homer uses it.

To its credit, *The Simpsons Movie* isn't that bad. It had its share of legitimately earned laughs, and I was even quoting lines days after viewing. Quite simply, *The Simpsons Movie* captures where the show presently is, and how you currently feel about the average Sunday episode will serve as the baseline for how you'll feel about the film.

It's not perfect, but for those of us who have been with the show for the better part of our lives, perfection might not really be necessary. It's still *The Simpsons Movie*, and even if for the sake of reverence, it's probably worth checking out.



Superbad, but in a good sort of way

filmreview

Superbad

Opens 17 August
Directed by Greg Mottola
Starring Michael Cera and Jonah Hill

BEN CARTER
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Most movies about high school seem to be either about having sex or getting wasted, so it only makes sense that the new comedy *Superbad* prominently features both.

The premise is simple enough: Seth (Jonah Hill) and Evan (Michael Cera) are two high school seniors about to go their separate ways in life. The thoughtful, sweet Evan is on his way to Dartmouth, while the loud, foul-mouthed Seth heads to an unnamed state school, "where the girls are half as smart and twice as hot." To play hero and impress two interested females (Emma Stone and Martha MacIsaac), they enlist the help of another classmate (one with a fake ID played by Christopher Mintz-Plasse) to acquire a few hundred dollars' worth of alcohol.

Of course, complications ensue—because unlike Canadian teens,

American high school seniors can't simply enlist the help of the nearest 18-year-old dumb kid—and the three endure one ridiculous sequence after another, involving two bored cops (Seth Rogen and *Saturday Night Live*'s Bill Hader) and an unfortunately lousy driver (Joe Lo Truglio).

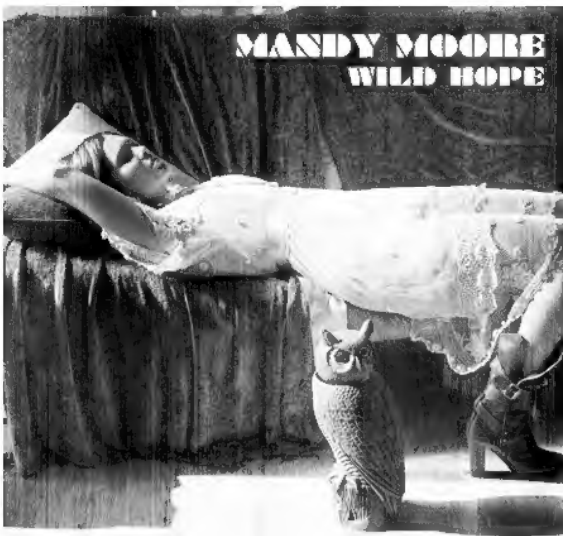
Written by Rogen and Evan Goldberg, the movie shares much in common with Apatow's recent hits: *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up*. Rogen and Goldberg's script is lightning-quick, crude in the most creative of ways, and exceptionally quotable. There's also a great deal of improvisation from the cast, who all have great chemistry and are very clearly enjoying themselves. These elements combine to give the movie a very loose, raw feeling that's different from anything recently produced by this crew.

Hill and Cera's chemistry is multifaceted: the two bounce lines off each other effortlessly and their comedic styles are a perfect fit, but there exists just the right amount of tension between them to add a dimension of realism. Hill is the breakout star, as he gives his character an endearing arrogance that makes you want to cheer for him despite his intense vulgarity.

Cera, master of the awkward

moment on the already legendary *Arrested Development*, plays the straight man to Hill's motor-mouthed wise guy. Mintz-Plasse is equally hilarious as the supremely nerdy Fogel—or, as he comes to be known, "McLovin." But unlike most high school movies that spew cliché after tired cliché, *Superbad* seems remarkably fresh and realistic. Seth and Evan are nervous and awkward, publicly excited yet privately unsure of the future of their lifelong relationship. Despite the crudity and vulgarity, there is a sentimentality between the two (and throughout the film) that doesn't seem forced or inaccurate in any way.

Superbad appears to be engaging in self-promotion using guerilla-marketing strategies, with an R-rated trailer making the rounds on the Internet getting people excited for the release, and adding to it by lining up numerous advance screenings. However, seeing this film inspires the question of whether any sort of aggressive marketing tactics will even be necessary. *Superbad* is one of the funniest movies of the year so far—and, while not being as sweet or audience-friendly as *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* or *Knocked Up*, should very quickly join them among the best American comedies in recent years.



albumreview

Mandy Moore
Wild Hope
Firm Music/EMI Music Canada

BRYAN SAUNDERS
Arts & Entertainment Staff

In 1999, Mandy Moore burst onto the charts with her bubble-gum-pop single “Candy.” Since then, in addition to trying her hand at acting, the charming chanteuse has released several albums, all more inventive than the first. Unfortunately, these have gone largely ignored by the innovation-

weary pop industry; however, instead of giving in and returning to cookie-cutter pop, Moore takes on a completely different direction with her latest release. Through this mature and sophisticated album, the now 23-year-old Moore shows just how much she has

grown since her very first single. *Wild Hope* is a mellow but rousing and deeply personal collection of songs, all co-written by Moore along with written or vocal contributions by such names as The Weepies, Chantal Kreviazuk, and the up-and-coming Bret Dennen. The lyrics are meaningful and poetically impressive. The complex instrumentals feature pianos, drums, cellos, violins, wurlitzers, bouzoukis, the odd ukulele, and just about every type of guitar there is. With extraordinary tracks such as “Can’t You Just Adore Her?”, “Looking Forward to Looking Back,” and “Wild Hope,” this is actually a Mandy Moore album worth checking out.



albumreview

Wil
By December
EMI Music Canada

MARIA KOTOVYCH
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Have you ever gone out for a run, started out at a nice, strong pace, but then started to poop out after a while? *By December* must know this feeling, because that’s exactly what this album does. The first two tracks, “Tell You Twice” and “Friend of Mine,” are upbeat, interesting and catchy; Wil’s

voice carries the folk-rock tunes nicely. “Wedding Dress” begins with a beautiful crescendo of strings, while “Rain On” is two steps away from being a country waltz, adding musical variety to this album. Sadly, by the sixth track, the songs—much like a tired runner—begin to slow down and lose steam. The next

few songs are all boring, nondescript, mid-tempo pieces that sound whiny and interchangeable after awhile. For instance, certain parts of the chorus in “December” sound exactly like parts of the refrain of “The Way I Used To.” “Tight Fist” and “Help” lead the pack of sappy and whiny numbers. However, just as that runner might get a sudden burst of energy towards the end of a long run, this album also presents an interesting song in the second-last position. The twangy, electric-country style of “Honey Pie” is reminiscent of Big & Rich’s “Save a Horse (Ride a Cowboy).” Unfortunately, this one catchy tune cannot make up for the last few songs. By the time the last track ends, the listener will probably be waiting for the finish line.



PHIL HEAD

HE’S SO WHITE AND NERDY The sweet polka sounds of “Weird” Al Yankovic rocked the Capital Ex main stage on 25 July, accompanied by frequent costume changes. No death threats were issued by Coolio during the performance.

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THE GATEWAY

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- The position’s duties include:
- Delivering the *Gateway* to designated locations on and around campus
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 - Sorting incoming newspapers and other publications and displaying them neatly in the *Gateway* offices
 - Co-ordinating collation of that year’s issues of the *Gateway* for the production of bound editions

- The successful applicant for this position will:
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For further information or to apply, contact
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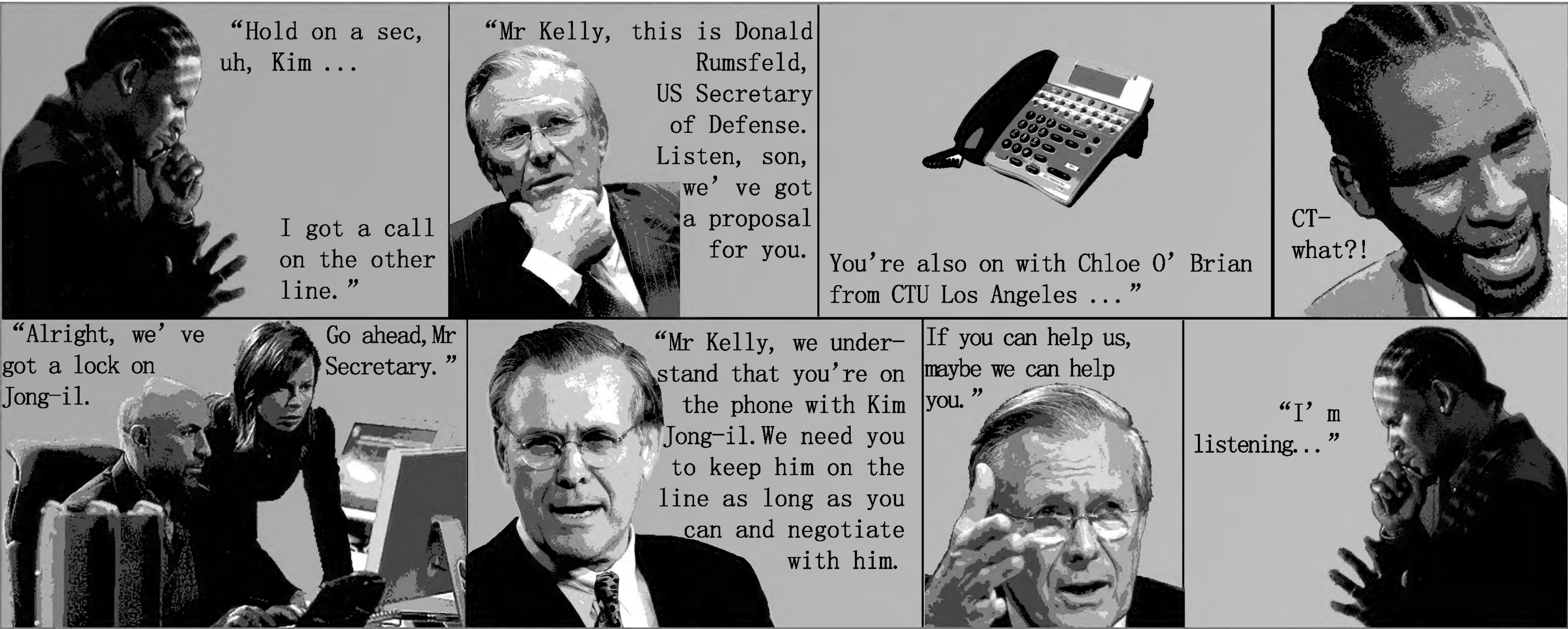
RESERVOIR KOOPAS by Mike Kendrick

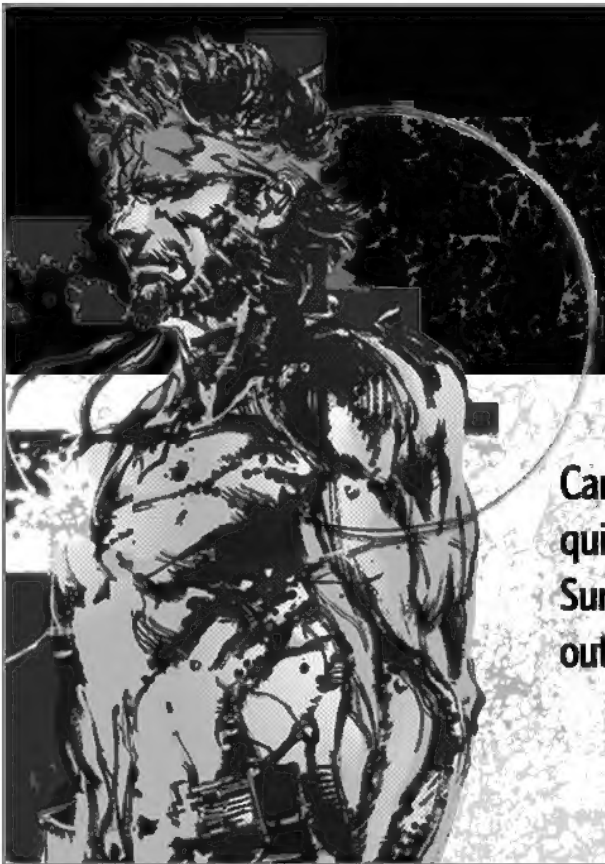


MAN VS NATURE by Conal Pierce



COMIC NAME by Adam Gaumont





NEXT ISSUE

Campus can get dangerous with the academic year quickly approaching. The *Gateway's* annual Orientation Survival Guide has all the know-how you need to make it out alive.

Look for it on newsstands August 30th

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Want to help stop the Alberta Tar Sands, one of the most destructive projects on the planet? Greenpeace wants you. Contact our Edmonton office at 430-9202.



KRYSTINA SULATYCKI

THE GATEWAY

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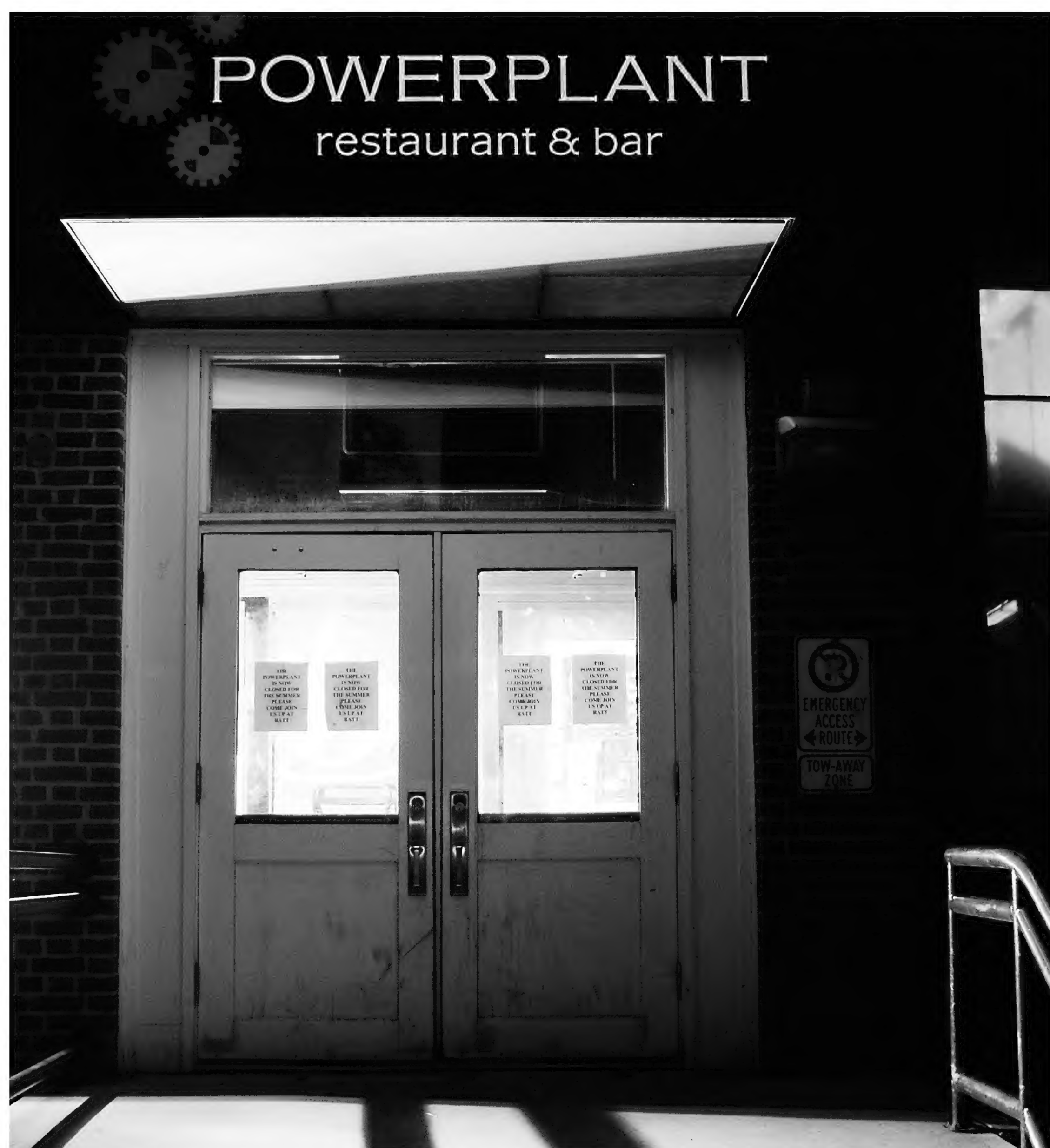


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: MIKE OTTO

THE SECOND (OR THIRD, OR FOURTH?) COMING A short-term fix has been instituted at the Powerplant for next year.

New Powerplant plan promises fewer losses

RYAN HEISE
Deputy News Editor

After a summer of locked doors and dry taps, the Students' Union has revealed plans for the immediate future of the Powerplant.

The new strategy will see the 'Plant reopen its doors come September, but with a very different operational structure. The SU will run Dewey's Lounge as a licensed coffee shop while the space east of the main bar, formerly the buffet, will be used as student study and relaxation space, as well as an area for student groups.

The SU will also retain control of the kitchen space, to be used for short-order items at Dewey's and to house their catering service that currently operates out of L'Express in SUB.

"The primary goal in all of this is to make a functional space that students are going to use that's not going to be wasting students' money," said Eamonn Gamble, SU VP (Operations and Finance). "We use our business revenues to fund our services, to fund our space, to fund our advocacy; and if a business of ours is losing money, it's impractical."

The decision to shift the operational approach of the building was made when the University agreed to cut the SU's rent and utilities costs for the building by nearly 50 per cent. In return, the University will control the

space west of the main bar, as well as the games area.

"It's a short term solution in that we're making sure we are not going to be losing a lot of money this year on rent and utilities," explained SU President Michael Janz, who added that the ability for the SU to keep their liquor license was a big draw and may factor into the future of the space.

Over the course of the next eight months, the SU plans on putting together a Powerplant Refocusing Committee to evaluate the sustainability of the space and to come up with a longer-term solution. During this time, the Powerplant will see no major renovations or structural changes.

The University is currently unsure of what their plan for the west side the Powerplant will be.

Janz sees this solution as a win-win situation for the University and the SU as it addresses concerns that both groups have.

"It'll be a success because we're providing student group space; we're still going to keep the liquor license and the restaurant, and we're going to have time to sit back without the heavy burden around our neck ... to come up with a long term solution for the Powerplant," Janz explained.

By the end of 2006, the Powerplant had lost the SU nearly \$210 000.

PLEASE SEE GAUMONT ♦ PAGE 5

Global Youth Assembly engages future world leaders to make change

SCOTT FENWICK
News Writer

Young people from around the world gathered last week at the Global Youth Assembly in Edmonton to discuss issues such as poverty, racism, and violence, as well as to find ways to tackle them.

The conference, hosted by the John Humphrey Centre for Human Rights, marked the first time it's been held outside of New York, and attracted over 500 delegates.

Kiran Chaudry, the coordinator of the event, explained that she wanted to attract more than just political science students and to engage youth from all walks of life.

"There's a lot of poli-sci people who are really interested in the issues," she said. "But in order to have greater change, we need to make sure we are engaging a broad and diverse spectrum of views."

Workshop presenters Aimee Fullman and Lisa Baroldi said they were impressed with how interested the delegates were. Their workshop had a mock debate on the Convention

on Cultural Diversity, an international agreement designed to promote and protect cultures within countries. Although the Convention is rooted in the UN, Baroldi said the workshop attracted more than those involved in global politics.

"Even the tech guy spoke with us for 20 minutes before and after [the workshop]," Fullman said. "What is very inspiring is how interested everyone seemed and how genuinely they cared."

"People were getting up and saying 'In my country, we practiced genital mutilation,' and talked about their own experiences."

Muna Peria, a delegate from Ottawa, said the inspiring stories shared at conferences such as the Global Youth Assembly is what people remember.

"Sometimes, as we're doing work, you can get jaded," Peria explained. "It's interesting to find out different ways people look at problems, and the ways [they] deal with them."

Peria said the Assembly is a "recharge" for her before going back to school in September.

"It's been stimulating in terms of

my own thoughts on what I'm going to do when I get back home," she said. "A place like this is a place of inspiration and an opportunity to connect with young people."

The Assembly also presented ways of reaching out to more young people. Sol Guy, a Canadian music producer, showcased *4REAL*, the TV series he's producing that's set to air on CTV and MTV Canada. The show takes rich celebrities to developing countries to meet young leaders changing their communities under extreme circumstances.

Guy hopes that presenting social problems on channels like MTV makes youth feel that it's "cool to care," explaining that serious issues get large followings when it's popular to discuss it.

"People [have] got to engage—and people don't tend to engage until it really gets to that point. I hope that we pass on the spirit and energy of those young leaders we feature around the world to ignite change."

Guy feels that if *4REAL* makes youth care, it will start the first steps toward helping others.



MIKE OTTO

FIRING UP YOUTH Kiran Chaudry explains the power young people have.

"If you open your heart up and open it to the world around you, you can't help but be affected," he said. "You give enough information to engage young people, and if they want, they can take it further."

Fullman feels the conference grabbed the attention of youths simply by thinking about their views on society. In the workshop she and Baroldi held, a 1997 trade dispute between Canada and the US was examined.

In that dispute, Canada argued that magazines represented a country's culture, justifying a tariff on American magazines. Attendees had to decide what items embodies culture and explain why.

"What was amazing about this session was that kids really picked up on [the] vagueness," she explained. "Success is having someone think about something in a slightly different way and just going home thinking about it."

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Festravaganzathon

Gateway photographers show us why Edmonton is known as Canada's festival city, and there's still a month to go.

PHOTO FEATURE, PAGES 6-7



Film Springfield

The Simpson's Movie must be hot. They don't need a big ad, or even correct spelling, according to Mike Larocque.

A&E, PAGE 10

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colophon

The Gateway is created using Macintosh computers, HP Scanjet flatbed scanners, and a Nikon Super Cool Scan optical film scanner. Adobe InDesign is used for layout. Adobe Illustrator is used for vector images, while Adobe Photoshop is used for raster images. Adobe Acrobat is used to create PDF files which are burned directly to plates to be mounted on the printing press. Text is set in a variety of sizes, styles, and weights of **FENICE**, **Joanna**, **Kepler** and **Whitney**. The Manitoban is the Gateway's sister paper, and we love her dearly, though "not in that way." The Gateway's games of choice are *Scrabulous* and *Need for Speed: Ural Edition*.

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“Councillor remuneration is a dying issue.

CAM LEWIS

Proxying for Arts Councillor Al-Army Sumar
On his opinion of councillor pay during attendance

COUNCIL FORUM

by Ryan Heise
Deputy News Editor

Students' Council meets every second Tuesday in the Council Chambers in University Hall at 6pm. Council meetings are open to all students. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 21 August.

COUNCIL WANTS TO HELP YOU HELP COUNCIL

Engineering Councillor Prem Eruvbetine gave a presentation on Council outreach to open Tuesday's meeting.

He argued that the SU should strive to create a more visible presence around campus, and suggested a Council mentorship program in which interested U of A students would be able to spend a day with a councillor to see how their role within the Students' Union works and learn how they can contribute.

"Councillors should be very active in their faculties. It's currently very difficult to do that, and that's a big problem," Eruvbetine explained.

He also said the SU should make their website more interactive and informative for students through polls and discussion boards.

Eruvbetine cited low election turnout and consistently empty seats on Council for the need to rethink the way the SU advertises itself.

"It's not a problem we can solve in one day, one year. It's a problem that needs to be dealt with year after year."

COUNCILLOR PAY PLAGUES POLITICIANS' PEROGATIVE

For the second meeting in a row, remuneration was a hot topic. However, Tuesday's Council meeting was more about adding some clarity to the debate.

Council Chair Amanda Henry was sponsored by Board of Governors representative Paul Chiswell to clarify how remuneration works. She explained that Council pay is based on attendance, and that Councillors are able to miss two meetings per trimester that Council sits. If a third meeting is missed, the councillor forfeits half of their pay for that trimester. If a fourth meeting is missed, all pay is forfeited.

Furthermore, councillors are paid more depending on whether they sit on or chair any committees. However, pay for these positions is self-policed by other members.

Later in the meeting, a motion was moved to remove Bill 1 (Councillor Remuneration) from Bylaw and put it back into Students' Council standing orders.

After a short debate over whether or not Bill 1 would be passed over by Council or not, a second motion was passed for the Council Administration Committee (CAC) to review remuneration procedures and submit it to Council for approval.

QUESTION PERIOD

President Janz was asked about the approval of paying for cellphones for the executive. Janz explained that other students' unions subsidize cellphone use for their executive, and that they didn't get locked into a long-term contract.

NEWS BRIEFS

SPACE ELECTRONS LESS VAGUE

A University of Alberta team led by Dr Jonathan Rae, a research associate in the Physics Department, has recently shed some new light on the nature of a type of mysteriously dangerous electron found in space. These negatively charged particles sometimes occupy the area of space that closely surrounds Earth, making it a dangerous place for satellites and even humans.

"These electrons are really hazardous to space travel," Rae explained. "They cause a lot of radiation damage to all of the spacecraft that are up there, from research spacecraft to the space shuttle and the space station, and also telecommunication satellites and all that sort of stuff."

In an effort to allow researchers and astronauts the ability to avoid dangerous situations in the future, Rae's team has revealed the series of events that may lead to the creation of these killer electrons.

According to their findings, an intense solar wind bombards the Earth's magnetosphere and causes it to undulate. Then, these ripples in the magnetosphere force compressional waves towards Earth, which then join with magnetic field lines. Finally, the magnetic field lines resonate at the frequency required to create killer electrons.

"The research is basically trying to explain how, when, and why these electrons are actually energized to these really high energies and cause this sort of damage," Rae said.

The team's discoveries were made possible through observations conducted simultaneously by satellites and ground-based systems. Instruments

on the Earth's surface and satellites in space studied the same area of space at the same time, which is a rare occurrence in studies of the cosmos.

"To fly a few satellites through the huge region of space is very important," Rae stated. "But to actually put [their] measurements into context, you can do this relatively cheaply with a set of instruments on the ground. So, to put the picture together, [it is] really, really important—otherwise you miss an enormous amount of what's going on."

by Brendan Cox
News Writer

LIBRARIES LOOK TO THE INTERNET

University of Alberta Libraries is heading in a new online direction in an attempt to reach students through social networking.

Recently, the Library launched a Facebook application that will allow users to access and search the library catalogue, as well as use the Ask Us and Get It Citation services.

According to Karen Adams, director of library services and information resources, this new venture is a new way to approach education and information sharing.

"I don't think we understand ... what the relationship is between social networking and learning. It's just an opportunity to test it."

The Library also launched their own social networking system, uSpace, in June. The site allows U of A students the ability to connect solely with other members of the school to share interests, as well as resources for projects.

"It is pretty much an experiment," explained Adams, in regards to both new projects. "We want to go to where students are—where we'll be able to connect with them."

by Ryan Heise
Deputy News Editor

STREETERS

The Students' Union recently released its plan for the Powerplant.

If you were the SU, what would you do with the struggling venue?



Nelson Yarmoloy
Engineering III



Dave Crawford
Mechanical
Engineering Grad
Studies



Susan Brune
University
employee



Peter Collum
Robin's dad

"I don't know; I thought it would be kind of cool to try something different, like maybe a shisha bar, with hookahs; something different. University students might be into doing that."

"Pretty basic: sell booze. It's pretty ridiculous to lose money on a university campus selling alcohol."

"Hookahs and hookers."

"Brewery. Make a brewery out of it—a microbrewery. Albertans tend to drink the pilsners and lagers, so start with that maybe."

Compiled and photographed by Steve Smith and Ryan Heise



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light at the end of the tunnel



Fun and games for Comp Sci prof

OLESIA PLOKHII
News Staff

He's had calls from some of the largest newspapers in North America. He's been accosted by journalists and computer geeks alike. He's quickly become an international celebrity by the Internet's fast-paced standards. He's made an unprecedented contribution to the field of artificial intelligence.

The man of the minute is University of Alberta Computer Scientist Jonathan Schaeffer, and he's interested in having computers master tasks that you and I think require the intelligence of a human being.

This April, Schaeffer proved what many gaming experts have been claiming for years: that the game checkers, when played perfectly, will always end in a draw. But when Schaeffer first created a computer program that used artificial intelligence to try to "solve" Checkers in 1989, he was unaware that almost 20 years and two programs later, he would finally have his wish.

Such a grand accomplishment didn't come easy, though. Rewinding more than 30 years to when he was a seventh-grader struggling with his marks, Schaeffer says that his precarious love affair with games first started with chess, which improved his thinking skills dramatically.

"[Chess] gets your concentration up; it's very analytical and serves as an excellent medium for students to acquire thinking skills," he says.

Needless to say, soon after his grade-seven year, Schaeffer became a chess and computer whiz. Like many individuals who find both success and happiness in life, Schaeffer truly developed a passion for his craft, being easily able to find art in it. And even though he admits he's a gaming addict, Schaeffer is none too pleased with the games kids occupy themselves with nowadays, claiming they don't stimulate critical thought.



KING ME, MEAT BAG Solving checkers was a 20-year endeavour for Dr Schaeffer.

"I like playing games where I can create beauty on the board. What's disappointing is that recently, a culture change has emerged where people and youths are playing on shooter [video] games more frequently than card or board games, which makes their attention span much less," he warns.

After graduating from the University of Toronto with a degree in computing science, Schaeffer headed to grad school at the University of Waterloo in 1979 to work on his baby: a program aimed at chess domination. A decade later, Schaeffer was persuaded into checkers after his program crashed and burned in 1989. And so his affair with another eight-by-eight board began.

"When I started out, people would say, 'who's that nut doing games?' But it wasn't silly because games are an excellent test bed for artificial intelligence," he explains.

He created a computer program, which he dubbed "Chinook," to try to analyze the game, while still making sure to annihilate any human checkers players that crossed its path. The program was active every waking moment since its inception, basically trying to find a needle in a haystack by analyzing each of the 500 billion billion positions in the game before

making the best available move. Schaeffer admits that after the program won against the best human in a 1994 championship and garnered him a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records, he was obsessed.

"Anyone who works on a program like this has to be a little obsessed," he admits. "No one has done this before because no one was foolhardy enough to tackle something this ridiculously large."

One could imagine how euphoric Schaeffer felt on 29 April at 6:03pm, when his checkers program continuously flashed one word: "draw."

Schaeffer said he was in stunned disbelief when he realized he'd done it. And even though he says bragging rights are good, Schaeffer insists that the fact that these seemingly unsolvable problems are being solved before our very own eyes is the real accomplishment.

Now that he has three weeks of much-needed vacation time to soak up the fame—all the while entertaining his other interests such as family, polar exploration, and history—Schaeffer can find comfort in his monumental discovery.

"I dream of my technology improving the quality of people's lives, knowing I have made a contribution to the state of the art."

3-D adds depth to teleconferencing

SCOTT FENWICK
News Writer

Teleconferencing with holograms using the living-room TV may soon be as routine as using the phone, according to a local product developer working with the University of Alberta.

Research consortium TR Labs is working with the U of A computer science department to bring a different type of videoconferencing—tele-immersion, where people meet in a virtual space—to life.

David Antoniuk, the business development director of TR Labs, said it will give people a richer experience while getting in touch with others.

"You [will] see the person so life-like, they're almost there," he explained.

Tele-immersion is the next step from tele-presence, the state-of-the-art technology where people feel like they're in the same room. Multiple screens and cameras are used, where people feel like they're talking through windows that are actually TV screens.

Jacques-André Boulay, a PhD candidate in computer science, is working on combining tele-presence and tele-immersion, in a project named iTRANCE. The idea is to have a system

where people around the world can feel as if they're in the same room to view and discuss holograms of models in real time.

"The main objective is to create ... the illusion of being there together," said Boulay. "It gives you the impression you're in another world because everything is in 3-D."

Combining the two technologies involves placing the hologram spots either in front of the TV screens, or at an angle between the room's chairs and the screens. However, the TV screens used will be different from the ones already on the market: they will project a 3-D holographic image when viewed from a certain angle.

In applying the technology to business, Boulay said it can be used in product development. For example, he said, "many people from different sides [of a company] can meet and speak together about the design of a car," adding that this virtual car could even be taken apart to look at its pieces.

The new 3-D TVs to be used in Boulay's project also bring the opportunity to allow teleconferencing through people's living rooms. Antoniuk said that answering a TV teleconference call will be like using a phone.

"You [won't] pick up the hand set anymore. You'll pick up the remote control, and then ... you could see [the caller] in life size," he said. "The idea is that you can bring life-size video conferencing to the home, and that's what our goal is."

Antoniuk stated that combining the technologies has potential in training medical students, to name one of many possibilities. "They could be anywhere in the world via videoconferencing, looking at the operation as if they were there."

Boulay also notes the potential in undergraduate classes that use complex diagrams or schematics.

"Some concepts can be hard to understand because most of the time, you look at the manual, and the drawings are in 2-D," Boulay explained. "If you could see this stuff in 3-D, it could be easier to learn."

With the growing public attention tele-immersion has received, many have compared it to the Holodeck on the TV show *Star Trek*, where crew members could enter holographic computer-simulated environments.

Antoniuk downplays the comparison, but notes that this is the "next-generation" of communicating.

"Visualization is going to be the next big wave of technology; it will give [users] a richer experience."

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Fake media still has its place

LET'S FACE IT: PRINT MEDIA IS DEAD. YOU SEE the stuff you're reading this on? Thin and white? *Paper*—have you heard of it? There's a good chance you might not have, what with the Internet, which I hear is all the rage these days. Twenty-four-hour news sites, blogs, and RSS feeds have supplanted newspapers, magazines, and the evening news as the go-to source for information.

But perhaps I was a bit rash with that opening statement, especially since my job relies on paper pulp and soy-based inks. Old media still serves a very important role in delivering in-depth coverage that doesn't quickly get pushed into the annals of a server in India.

Still, the Internet, and blogging in particular, has a romance surrounding it that no other medium can match. Getting news from blogs is like being 16 years old and sharing your first kiss with a distant cousin: you're not sure if it's right or wrong, but goddamn it, you want it now.

What's more, the anonymity and timeliness that the Internet provides can make those who deliver the content take more risks, make off-the-cuff statements, editorialize, and generally run amok of what has come to be known as "good journalism."

Take, for instance, the Secret Diary of Steve Jobs—a blog run by someone using the pseudonym Fake Steve Jobs, fake CEO of Apple Inc. FSJ's blog, while incredibly humorous, was also lauded by the technology community—including the real Steve Jobs and Bill Gates—as being smart and having its finger on the pulse of what's happening in Silicon Valley. So much so that it was long believed Fake Steve could very well be the real Steve.

That is, up until this weekend when Brad Stone, a writer at the *New York Times*, did some digging and revealed Fake Steve to be *Forbes* editor Daniel Lyons. While no direct confession came from FSJ's blog, Lyons did fess up to creating Fake Steve, but promised to keep the blog up and running, going as far as to have *Forbes* sponsor it.

But where does this leave the blog as a brilliant and sharp-witted, but most importantly, romanticized source that strattles the line between fact and fiction? I guess that depends how you choose to look at media.

Lyons was providing a service to nerds everywhere: an unabashed look into the the mind of one of the world's most popular, and secretive, CEOs. Though it was almost a given that one day FSJ's cover would be blown, it was more fun to look at the character Lyons was playing, rather than the actor behind the keyboard. More importantly, Fake Steve was a little bit of every techno-geek. He spoke to an industry from the highest—albeit fictional—tier in a way that was refreshing, honest, and with little rhetoric.

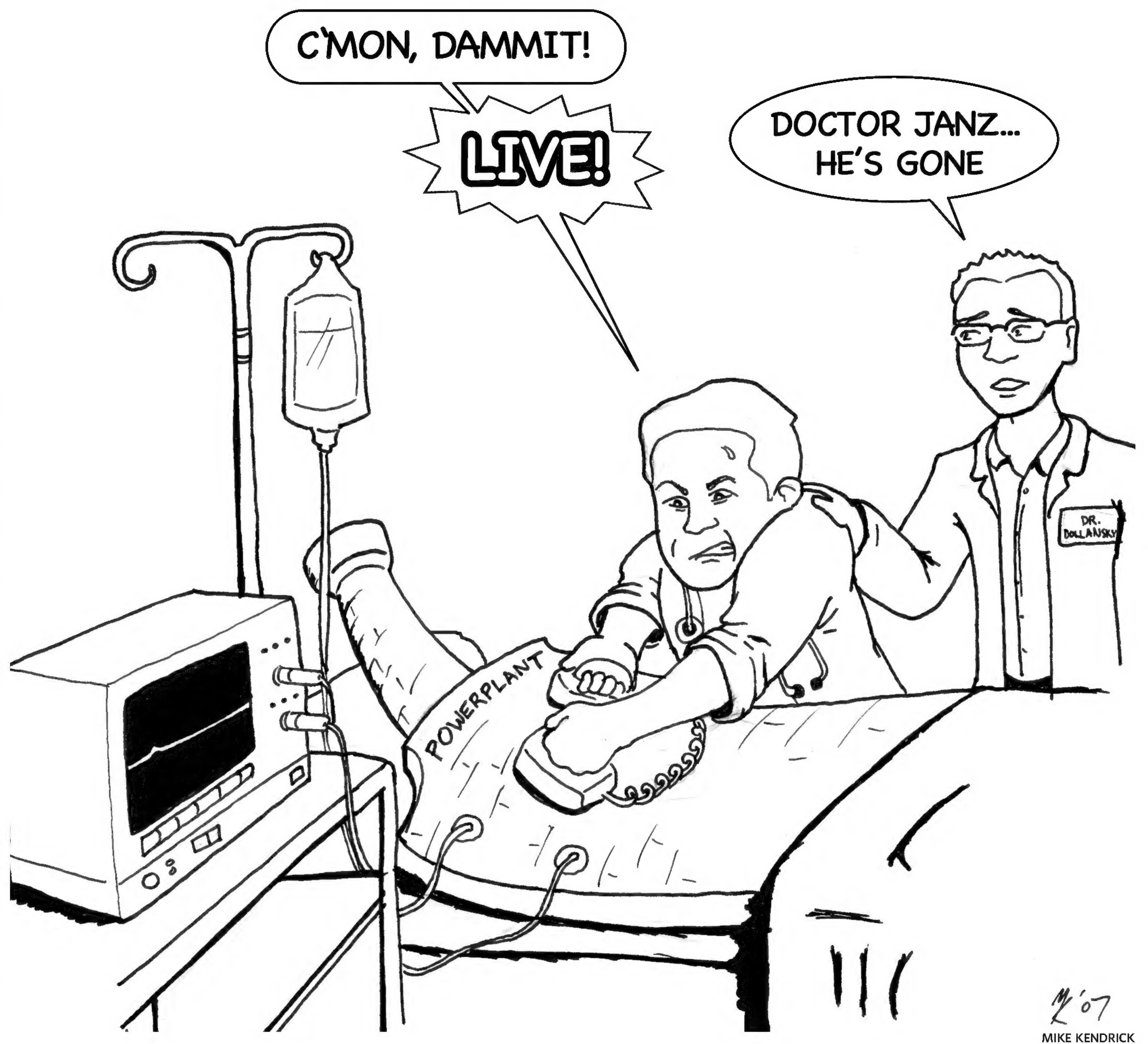
The Internet has erased the line between news and entertainment. What most old media outlets would never get away with is now commonplace online. Stories are published with information from sources as shady as the spam that sneaks through your email filter. Writers and experts are now names of average Joes with no credentials—not even a Wikipedia page—and their opinions are often some of the most honest and trustworthy around.

But the problem with this is that many of us have been conditioned to take most, if not all media, at face value. When a popular YouTube video is shown to have been staged or faked, it almost instantly loses all of its pop-culture value. When a huge news story is broken by a website and turns out to be erroneous, the trust in it is shaken and users return with trepidation. With how fast the news cycle operates online, the screw-ups are quickly pushed to the bottom of the page and, subsequently, out of many people's minds before they even realize what hit them.

The Internet and blogging is letting people get their news in a whole new way—a way that old media can't get away with. A way that's informative, entertaining, and opinionated enough to make you think more critically about events happening throughout the world. Even if it's coming to us anonymously, and whether it's right or wrong, new media has found a place for the masses to speak to the masses and be heard as loud they want to be heard.

That is, until old media comes along and debunks them as the hacks they are.

RYAN HEISE
Deputy News Editor



LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Laptops not the answer

I just read your article in the 4 September Gateway, about mandatory laptops for engineers. Anyway, WHAT A STUPID FUCKING IDEA!!!

I can't believe that anyone would think this is a good idea. Most people don't know how to use computers worth shit in the first place, and now they want to make people buy the most expensive, underpowered, and hard-to-use computers that you can get: laptops.

Laptops are extremely underpowered when you compare them to their equally priced desktop equivalents. They have way fewer capabilities, and are way less upgradeable. Because they are made to be smaller, they have to use non-standard components which make them somewhat incompatible and problem-prone.

Now, when you say that you can get laptops for students at \$100-\$150, that's hilarious. Any decent laptop is gonna cost someone at least \$3000, and to get one that could keep up with a desktop system it would cost closer to \$5000-\$6000. A price of \$1000 for a laptop is laughable. That would maybe get you a low-end Pentium with 4 megs of RAM, and a really shitty, hard-to-read screen.

Another factor with laptops (like

any computers) is that it is out of date as soon as you buy it. With the proposed plan, by the time first-year students got to fourth year, their laptops would be so out of date, compared to the first-years', that they would be almost useless (especially if they were buying out-of-date, \$1000 bargain-bin shit to start out the program).

If they were going to have a system that supported all those using it, they would have to run software that ran on the lowest common denominator of machine (which would be the fourth-year students' machines, cause they would be the oldest). That would make the first-year students' machines overkill cause they wouldn't be able to take advantage of their hardware.

Also, if the program was designed to use only the brand name of the laptop that the project leaders specified, the students would be forced into buying brand-name crap that they didn't particularly like. Can you say, "IMB"? That's what it would be for sure ... IBM Thinkpads for the masses ... God. People who like using Mac Powerbooks would be out of luck.

If laptops would be any benefit in the classroom, I think people would buy them and bring them themselves. What the hell good is a laptop in a math class? You gonna take math notes with a word processor? Hardly.

Anyway, there seems to be a lot of reasons *not* to make laptops mandatory, and there also seems to be a lot of problems with the system

that these monkeys have thought up. I know I could think of a lot more reasons. I won't bore you with this any more, but I noticed your lack of opinion in the article, so I thought I'd give you one.

ROB GRUE
9 September, 1997

Students don't count

Dear Sir—On this day of the Federal election, it should be of some interest to the several hundred students at the University of Alberta to ponder on how little influence they have on the result of this election. The several hundred who attend from outside points and are of voting age find that unless they return to their constituency they have no opportunity of exercising their franchise.

Is it not time a demand was made for a complete revision of the franchise? Surely the electoral system is hopelessly out of date. The very sections to which the community looks for leadership in art, science, and culture are by one means or another prevented from either voting or running for office. And then we are told that universities should be more practical and attempt to fit their students for problems of the world. Surely intelligent citizenship is the highest duty of any Canadian.

Our system of single member constituencies is particularly out of date now. With so many candidates in the field, it is quite possible that only a few ... will obtain a majority of

all the votes cast.

A great English publicist said, "The people of a country should be represented not disproportionately, but according to their numbers." After the results of today's competition are seen, perhaps our statesmen will be more favorable to multi-member constituencies and the transferable ballot.

Perhaps, too, our new Governor-General may enlighten them on representation from the universities as practiced in the old land, and in our Utopian future, university students and professors may be able to exercise 100 per cent of their citizenship rights.

A ALLEN
16 October, 1935

From the Archives is a semi-regular feature where the Gateway runs historical letters that we feel are of particular importance—or are just really hilarious.

"Real" letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building or e-mailed to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libelous or otherwise hateful in nature. The Gateway also reserves the right to publish letters online.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the author's name, program, year of study and student identification number to be considered for publication.

The 'Plant will wilt again

Just playing with my Wii

Try as they might, the SU is fighting the wrong battle with the Powerplant



ADAM
GAUMONT

It's becoming something of a tradition on campus: every summer, the new SU executive meets to discuss the Powerplant's fate, eventually coming up with a scheme aimed at reviving the historic building's sagging attendance and negative cash flow. Come next summer, when they inevitably have this meeting again, it will officially become a streak.

This isn't to say that this year's plan, unveiled yesterday in Council, is singularly bad. If anything, it's not really a plan so much as a scaling back, so in theory they should at least lose less money than they did the year before, when they introduced the now-infamous buffet.

However, at this point, no amount of micro-management or macro-renovation is going to dig the 'Plant out of the huge financial hole that it's in. What the SU needs to realize is that it's fighting not only against a failing business, but against that business' damaging reputation as well.

As such, how best to *design* the Powerplant shouldn't be the SU's chief concern—how to *sell* it should be. They need a slick, large-scale marketing campaign—one aimed at eager first-years who haven't been around

to hear all the horror stories about the 'Plant. One that builds up a loyal following, which was the basis of their previous success in years past. These kids won't know any better, so why not tell them that the 'Plant is in fact *the* place to be on a Friday night, that the food is delicious, and that the beer is cold and plentiful?

As local bar and club owners who reinvent their establishments every two or three years can attest, it's all about the hype.

Because believe it or not, the Powerplant used to be very successful not too long ago, based largely on such a formula. Old-timers (that is, people who graduated three or four years ago) will tell you that the current incarnation lacks the cheap drinks and good service it used to have, but let's be honest: that's not what gets you in the door.

As local bar and club owners who reinvent their establishments every two or three years can attest, it's all about the hype. Getting people talking about the place (favourably, that is) is what the SU should be concentrating on, not ways of cutting down expenses, hours, and services everywhere they can.

Nor can the SU rely on loyalty like they used to: the devoted followers of

years past have all up and graduated by now—even the jaded grad students and seventh-year floaters who looked like they'd never leave.

In their stead are the second- and third-years who've heard nothing but bad things the whole time they've been here about that dark, dingy building they pass on the way from Rutherford to SUB—and who've subsequently never even set foot inside there as a result. After all, they have the bright, spacious, seventh-floor conference room that is RATT for all their beer-consuming needs.

Couple this with the severely conflicting messages that the 'Plant has been sending its few current customers in the past few months—absurd hours, closed during the summer, secret plans for the future—and if you didn't know any better, you'd think they were *trying* to keep people out of there.

Given the seemingly insurmountable tide of public opinion (including, admittedly, many a critical newspaper article), many will tell you that the only way for the SU to climb out of the hole that they're in is to make a really big one between South Lab and Dent/Pharm, but I disagree. A marketing campaign aimed at said unsuspecting first-years would be a great place to start, even if their peers are a lost cause.

Maybe this way the Powerplant could start a brand new tradition—one that doesn't involve losing hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, preferably.



PAUL
OWEN

It's a right of passage and a cliché during university life to eschew all one's responsibilities for a summer, pack a knapsack as full as you can, and traipse across Europe for the warmer months of the year. Of course, everyone will ask you a million questions about your trip when you get back, but no one ever bothers to think about the people who are left behind for, say, the 76 days or so that you're gone.

So before you plan your summer getaway to the Old World without your significant other, keep this advice in mind: don't.

I know there's the art of Venice and the columns of Greece and the beer of Germany waiting for you across the pond, but the wonders to be experienced over there pale in comparison to the disappointment you'll suffer when you get back. If you've left a girlfriend behind, your entire trip will be mired in phone calls at unnatural hours of the day because she can never get the time change right, a fortune spent on calling cards, and a "hell hath no fury" reaction should you have the audacity to return home without a souvenir from every single stop along the way.

And if you're leaving your boyfriend in Edmonton for two and half months, you've got an even bigger problem: he will replace you with a Nintendo Wii. Instead of spending

\$300 to take you to the zoo, buy you flowers, or celebrate your anniversary, he will walk into EB Games and bring home a shining white box of Japanese ingenuity that he will name Adele and cuddle with in his sleep.

The first few weeks will seem like any other time apart. He'll answer your phone calls, keep you abreast of all your friends back home, bitch about how much he hates working, etc. Soon, however, the phone calls will take longer to answer, the conversation more distant, and you'll get the feeling he's not really paying attention to you. And that's because he isn't—he's playing *Mario Party 8* and taking advantage of his newly honed masturbation skills in the mini-game where you have to shake the pop can until it explodes.

Which brings me to my next point. You may think that sexual deprivation will keep him at your beck and call, but as soon as he remembers how much fun pulling his own pud six times a day can be, those dreams will be shattered. Add in the fact that the Wii has built-in Wi-Fi capabilities and an online browser, and he'll be watching porn on his TV screen instead of his laptop. Not only will this make for a bigger picture, but it will also avoid unsightly burns on his stomach when he rests his laptop there in order to gain access to the lap.

So, should you choose to leave your man at home for the summer while you gallivant through France and Italy and those other countries through which gallivanting is popular, don't get upset when you return home to find him making sexy eyes at his new piece of hardware. After all, your vagina can't play *Zelda*, now can it?

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Former Bear now basketballen in Germany



FILE PHOTO: NEAL WILDING

WHAT DO YOU CALL A BASKET IN GERMAN? Former U of A guard James Hudson spent part of last season playing as a forward for the Citybasket team in Recklinghausen, Germany. He hopes to play at an even higher level this season.

ROBIN COLLUM
Sports Editor

Though some of his past teammates have hung up their sneakers, former basketball Bear James Hudson hasn't given up on his hoop dreams. The University of Alberta grad moved to Germany this past winter to play, and is now able to combine two of his favourite activities: playing basketball and seeing the world.

"I just wanted to get some experience, and I really wanted to travel," Hudson said. "So if I can play basketball and travel, and maybe have a bit of money in my pocket, what could be better?"

Hudson graduated from the Bears in 2006, and started looking for opportunities to play in Europe after he moved home to Vancouver. His lucky break came as a phone call from a former opponent: Chris Wright, who finished up with the University of Calgary Dinos the same season Hudson left the Bears, was playing for Citybasket in Recklinghausen and wanted to know if Hudson was interested in joining him.

"He knew I was looking to play in Europe and hadn't had anything going, so he called me up," Hudson explained. "You don't get recruited *per se* [in Europe]. You go to camps, or you send tapes, or get an agent, and they find something for you.

"Networking is the most important thing over there. You meet one person, then ten people down the line hear about you, and one calls you."

Citybasket were impressed enough by the forward to invite him to join

them for the last part of the season. He was with the team for two months, and played eight games for them. Of course, playing on a different continent meant having to adapt to a lot of changes.

"The basketball is different there," he said. "It's hard to explain, and I don't know if it's different for a spectator, [but] there are a couple of small things—just general rules of the game—that are different. I've had to make little tweaks in my game, but it's not a huge difference."

"I just wanted to get some experience, and I really wanted to travel. So if I can play basketball and travel, and maybe have some money in my pocket, what could be better?"

JAMES HUDSON

Hudson says that it's not the technical things that are the hardest to get used to, but rather the off-court differences.

"The language barrier would actually be the biggest thing [to adjust to]," he said. "Luckily, in Germany they speak really good English, so that helped a lot. In most countries, they don't speak English, so you have to use hand gestures and try to learn the language as much as possible."

As well, he noticed that the nature of the team experience is

different there than it was with the Bears squad.

"One thing the U of A is known for is team unity. On the court you know the guys, and off the court you know the guys. The team is your whole life," he said. "When you leave university, the camaraderie of the team sort of changes. It's certainly more job-like."

Having Wright in Germany made it easier to be so far from home, but at the end of the day, Hudson wasn't too bothered by loneliness.

"The whole reason I'm doing this is for a life experience. I love playing basketball, and realistically, the idea is to see Europe and have a good time with it," he said. "If I make the decision that that's what I'm looking for, the isolation of it all is a little easier to handle. I'm not going in order to make friends. It's just like if anyone else would go and travel, except I get to play basketball and don't really have to pay for my travel."

Hudson is currently exploring his options for next season. He could stay with Citybasket, but he hopes instead to move to a higher level of play, or even to another country in Europe, but he doesn't know yet what will happen.

"There was something going on in Italy, but I don't know if it's going to happen, and there are a lot of possibilities in Germany," he said. "It's a funny thing, though, because I'm saying this right now, but literally tomorrow I could get a phone call and something could happen."

"Right now I'm just working and playing, trying to stay in shape, and talking to the people that I know in Europe, talking to the people might know about different possibilities."

CIS girls come in fourth at Pan Am

DAN PLOUFFE
Should be part of the team

RIO DE JANEIRO (CUP)—The Canadian women's basketball team, featuring three of the top CIS athletes of the past few years, have settled for a fourth-place finish in the eight-team Pan American Games tournament, held in Rio de Janeiro from 20–24 July. Sarah Crooks, Uzoma Asagwara, and Devon Campbell showed their skills, but were unable to help their team overcome some tough international opponents.

The game that essentially knocked the Canadians out of the gold-medal contest was a 77–63 loss to Brazil in their final preliminary round—an exciting game played before 13 700 enthusiastic spectators—which caused a semifinal match-up against powerhouse Team USA.

Canada, currently ranked eleventh in the world, opened the Games with wins over Mexico and Jamaica, but followed up their loss to Brazil by falling 75–59 in the semifinal to the first-ranked Americans, and then lost 62–49 to eighth-ranked Cuba.

For many of the players, the highlight of the tournament was facing the Brazilians and playing in front of their passionate fans, who cheer as loudly for a successful free-throw as Canadian observers might expect for a championship win. They received a less than warm welcome at that game, but the Canadians had nothing but smiles on

their faces during warmup.

"There was a huge, huge berating of boos," said Asagwara, a 2007 All-Canadian guard with the University of Winnipeg. "That was different, but we knew it was going to happen—we were totally expecting it—so we just laughed it off; it wasn't a big deal."

Crooks, a former University of Saskatchewan Husky and 2006 and 2007 CIS Player of the Year, said it was the loudest atmosphere she's ever experienced playing basketball.

"Whether they're booing or cheering, we're just happy there's so many people out because we won't get that in Canada, so it's very exciting. It's really a lot of fun."

There was one moment when the venue went relatively quiet, though, as Canada went on a 10–2 run, building a 29–21 lead after the first quarter. It wasn't too long before the place was rocking again, though, as the Brazilians were impossible to slow down once they got going, and quickly erased the Canadian lead.

The Brazilians, eventual silver medalists, dominated thanks in large part to several towering players, whose giant quad muscles were on full display since the Brazilian women chose volleyball-style spandex shorts instead of the usual, looser, basketball variety.

"I'm lucky I didn't have to bang in there with the big girls," said Campbell, a 2006 Simon Fraser University grad. Nevertheless, she was stunned by an elbow to the face

on a third-quarter play when she was whistled for a foul.

"They're tough, they're quick, they're aggressive, and we knew it was going to be a tough fight," she said. "I think we did well at the beginning. We were executing our plays and were spacing well and moving the ball. Our defense is a constant—we feel like we can rely on that all the time. But as the game progressed, our shots just weren't falling, and we were unlucky in that regard."

All three recent CIS athletes played significant minutes for the national team over the course of the tournament, averaging about 20 minutes per game. For Campbell, who will return to Spain to play professionally for a second season this fall, the chance to suit up for Canada was "a lifelong goal."

"It's awesome. Every time I put on the uniform, I want to do something good for my country. It's an amazing experience being here and being a part of the senior team for the first time. I'm learning a lot and am loving it," she said.

Asagwara said she'd never before experienced the energy that she did at the Pan Am Games.

"The closest thing for me would be when we hosted the national championship," said Asagwara, a 2005 CIS tournament all-star when Winnipeg hosted the tournament. "That was crazy, but this is something completely different."



FILE PHOTO: KIM SMITH

MY BALL! GET YOUR OWN U of W's Uzoma Asagwara here in January.

Aaron still beats Bonds in my books

Barry Bonds may be ahead of Hank Aaron in numbers, but not in classiness



ROBIN
COLLUM

Baseball fans will remember the 2007 season for one reason: Barry Bonds. The Cubs could win the World Series or George Steinbrenner could attend a Yankees game in the nude, and it would still go down as the summer that Bonds beat Hank Aaron. But it shouldn't, because he hasn't.

Bonds, who has been chasing Aaron's career home-run record for years, finally beat it on Tuesday, slamming his 756th homer into the bleachers at home in AT&T Park in San Francisco. Sullying this historic achievement, however, is his reputation as less-than-clean. One of the biggest names of what is already being called baseball's "steroid era" of the late 1990s and the early part of this decade, Bonds is known to have used chemical enhancers from San Francisco's infamous Bay Area Laboratory Co-op (BALCO) labs.

Bonds has been surrounded by allegations of serious doping for years, but he attributed his bulked-up frame to diet and exercise. In 2003, his trainer, Greg Anderson, was indicted by a US federal grand jury for allegedly having supplied athletes with steroids. Bonds denied he was involved, and later claimed under oath that his trainer had given him a cream and a liquid

substance, but that he thought they were arthritis lotion and flaxseed oil. Prosecutors maintained that these were in fact two forms of the designer anabolic steroid THG developed at BALCO, and that Bonds knew it. These suspicions, shared by many baseball fans, have only intensified as he closed in on and broke Aaron's record. He's currently under investigation by a grand jury about whether he perjured himself when he denied the steroid use.

Beating a record is like winning a sprint; it's meaningless unless you're running on the same track.

For many baseball fans, myself included, Bonds's record-quest is an insult to the integrity and history of the game. Hank Aaron was one of the classiest players in baseball. So classy, in fact, that he put aside any rancour he felt at Bonds's suspected steroid use and taped a congratulatory message that played after Bonds hit the record homer on Tuesday night.

"It's a great accomplishment which requires skill, longevity, and determination. ... My hope today, as it was on that April evening in 1974 [when Aaron passed Babe Ruth], is that the achievement of this record will inspire other to chase their own dreams," the message said.

To see his achievement tarnished by another player's chemist leaves a bad taste in the mouth. Bonds may have beaten Aaron in numbers, but by altering the equation with his alleged steroid use he's rendered the accomplishment worthless. Beating a record is like winning a sprint; it's meaningless unless you're running on the same track.

There are Bonds apologists out there who claim that we as fans can't be too hard on him because we are partially to blame for the prevalence of juicing in the sport. He may be a monster, they say, but we built him, and shouldn't decry responsibility now that it makes us a little bit uncomfortable.

This argument has some weight: baseball fans and the MLB did turn a blind eye in the last decade to what, even at the time, seemed like obvious steroid use. Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa, for instance, who both broke the single-season home run record in 1998, enjoyed suspicious success late in their careers, just like Bonds is now. The best sluggers of the past all had careers that followed a certain arc, with their numbers slumping as they aged. Not so this batch of stars.

But that's exactly why we shouldn't take Bonds' record seriously: his alleged steroid use, if proven true, will have given him such an unfair advantage against athletes of the past—and those contemporaries who stay off the juice—that he may as well not be competing for the same prize.

Oilers owners just say no to drugs

But when the team ownership rejected drugstore billionaire Daryl Katz's offer, they missed a great opportunity to rescue the Oilers from mediocrity



PAUL
OWEN

For those of you local hockey fans who can't get enough of the status quo, it's time to rejoice. The Edmonton Investors Group (EIG) has once again turned down pharmaceutical mogul Daryl Katz's attempt to buy the Oilers, and has gone on record stating that the team is not for sale.

You'll just have to excuse the rest of us here in the Heartland of Hockey for treating this like a bit of a funeral. Sure, this could just be a last negotiating ploy to force the price north of \$200 million, but if it's not, it has serious ramifications not just on Oiler fans, but on the entire city of Edmonton.

The reality of the situation is that regardless of who owns the team, the Oilers will have a new downtown arena built in the near future. If the EIG had sold to Katz (at a hefty profit from what they invested to purchase the team in 1998 by the way—it's not as though they were being lowballed), the Rexall pharmacy group owner pledged to "make a significant additional investment of time and money towards the development of a new downtown arena facility for the team and the city if that's what the people of Edmonton want."

While the EIG brought up discussion of a new arena, they have hardly indicated a desire to pay for it, even as Mayor Stephen Mandel has searched

for options besides reaching into taxpayers' pockets. With the EIG still at the helm, you can be sure that the Oilers' new home will be paid for through your rising property taxes, unless Mandel can find an acceptable alternative—a dwindling hope considering his casino idea was shot down.

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Ironically, in turning down the latest Katz offer, EIG spokesman Cal Nichols stated that "This is not about dollars. This is about Edmonton. An ownership group is best-suited for Edmonton and the Oilers."

Of course, Nichols never bothered to explain why or how an ownership group was better for Edmonton, especially when some of the owners undoubtedly don't want to spend any more of their own money trying to keep the team competitive.

From a hockey standpoint, this doesn't help the team either. The notoriously tight-fisted EIG is loath

to spend anywhere near the \$53-million salary cap. Katz, meanwhile, asserted that he would "play to the salary cap every year to help make sure [the Oilers were competitive]." As it stands currently, that's about \$6 million more than the Oilers are set to spend this season.

Additionally, get used to seeing the same semi-incompetent faces in the same jobs. Nichols, who suggested that Chris Pronger should have gotten a divorce instead of asking to be traded from Edmonton; team president Pat Laforge, who has been at the front of the "Build us a new arena" movement since it began and has a history with being less than honest with the community (both by claiming the squad that finished last season by losing 22 of their last 26 games was competitive and by perpetuating the lie that Ryan Smyth's trade wasn't about the money); and general manager Kevin Lowe, who overpaid for Dustin Penner, bungled the draft, and cried woe to the media over tea on his back deck.

So now that the ownership is no longer in doubt, all we can hope for is that the Oil can recover from what Nichols calls "collateral damage" from the offer. Because apparently Nylander not signing here and Lowe passing on Cherepanov were Katz's fault, and the team suffered horribly because of it by selling more season tickets faster than ever before. Perhaps that's the biggest problem: no matter how often the current ownership group screws up, there are still too many Edmontonians not willing to show them the door.

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